THE COPY of a LETTER; BY A Minister in London To one of His PARISH Retired into the COUNTRIE;

CONTAINING

Religious Advice and Directions usefull for all Men, especially in this time of Great *Mortality*.

Whereunto is annexed a pious Meditation or Prayer, suitable to the condition of such as are yet free from the Infection.

Also a Direction for one esteeming himself near Death, how to resign his soul to the LORD.

LONDON,
Printed by *T. R.* and are to be sold at the *Gilded Lion*, in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1665.

The Copy of a Letter by a Miniſter of London *to one of his Pariſh retired into the Countrie*

Worthy Sir,

EXcuſe me, if I *ſadly reſent* your Departure (with other of my *good* Pariſhioners) out of the City, *eſpecially* upon this *ſad* Occaſion; Part of my Comfort in *this* Condition is, that you will give me leave to *Communicate* my Thoughts to you concerning this Diſpenſation of Almighty God: I hope, I have *not* neglected this *ſo long*, that you are *afraid* to give my Letter *Entertainment*. O the *great* Change, that He (*who changeth the times and the ſeaſons*) can bring to paſſe in a *ſmall* Time! Or (if you pleaſe) take it *thus*. *Such* a Puniſhment hath befallen us, in the *Fore-head* of which the Sins of *this* City, and Nation are *written*, as with a *beam* of the *Sun*. The *wanton* Provocation of Luſt in our Meats, the *unclean* Pollution of Whoredome (like *that* of *Iſrael*) is *on* our Tables, and *in* our Tents; and we have *magnified* our ſelves in the Multitude, and Mightineſſe of our Nation, (as did *David*:) No wonder then, that the Wrath of GOD is *incenſed*, and the Plague is *great* among us. We have *burn'd* in Luſt, Malice, Harred, and Revenge: and now Almighty GOD hath ſent us a *burning* Feaver to *dry up* our Blood, and *conſume* our *very* Bones: We have (with *little* or *no* Provocation) *terrified*, and *tormented* Each other, and now we are juſtly become a Terror to One another. We have *ſlighted* Preachers ſubject to the *like Paſſions* with our *ſelves*, and now Almighty GOD ſends an Angel to *preach* to us, whoſe Words are Wounds, and the Periods of *whoſe* Speech, *haſten* the Period of *our* Lives. We ſo *diſregarded* the Knells of our *dear Friends* and *Neighbours* (ringing out *but ſeldom*) that *now* we can neither *eat*, nor *ſleep*, *wake*, nor *walk*, but they are *ſounding* in our Ears. *Every* Hour proving a Herald to *pro-*

claim the Death of *ſome* or *other*; Male, or Female; Maſter, or Servant; Parent, or Childe; Friend, or Neighbour. The LORD hath *not ſpared* to beſtow upon us *plentifully* the *ſweet water* of his Mercies; but we have *not* (in the Perfume of them) *follow'd* Him: *Juſtly* therefore doth he *now pour* forth the *bitter* Vials of his Wrath upon us. It muſt be confeſt to be an *heavy* Judgement, and *horrible* ſickneſs, which *devours* now, and *eats up* People in *this* great City: & is *fearfully ſcattered* into *many* places in the Country. It is call'd (in Scripture) The *Hand of GOD*; *His Sword*; The *Stroke of his Angel*; The *Snare of the Fowler*; The *noyſome Peſtilence*; The *Terror by Night*; The *Arrow that flies by day*: The *Deſtruction that waſteth at Noon-day, and walks in Darkneſſe*. *Moſt* of *thoſe* Expreſſions are have in that *moſt Excellent* Pſalm the *Ninety firſt*: which I *deſire* you *often* to *read*, and *meditate* upon; out of *that* Spot of *holy* Ground is *ſuch* a Preſervative to be *gather'd* by the Hand of Faith, which *all* the Gardens in the World cannot afford, *farr ſurpaſſing* the *biggeſt* Bunches of Rue, Wormwood, and the beſt Angelica. Sir, *I durſt* be *confident*, you are *ſo good* a Chriſtian, that you *doe*, and *will* lay the Afflictions of *Others* to Heart, and *pitty* thoſe *poor* Souls, that *are afflicted* under the *mighty* Hand of GOD: who lie in a moſt *ruefull*, *comfortleſſe*, and *diſconſolate* Eſtate, and Condition: for *ordinarily* they are *deſtitute* of All *outward* Comforts; They *want* the Phyſician of Soul, and Body, the Preſence, and Comfort of their Friends, Neighbours, and *all* thoſe, that are *neareſt* and *deareſt* in Affection to them. They are *vexed* with the Rage of an *horrible* Diſeaſe; *aſſaulted* with the *fearfull* ſight of All their Sins; the Pangs of Death; and Terror of GODS *dreadfull* Tribunal! *Suffer* me then who *have had* the Honour to *inſtruct* you out of the Pulpit, to *direct* you in a Line, or *two*, to *put up* your ſupplications to GOD for *ſuch*, whoſe Houſes the Plague of Peſtilence hath made Priſons to them: Pray with us, that the LORD would bleſſe *every one* of them with a *right*, and *holy* uſe of his *heavy* Hand upon them; that he would give them *ſaving Sorrow*, and *true Repentance*; the Blood of his *dear* Son, Pardon of all their Sins; Perſvaſion of his Love and Favour, which is *better* then Life: true Peace of Conſcience; Patience to *endure* their *greateſt* Extremities; and a *full* recompenſe of *all* their *outward* Deſolations; with the *ſweet*, *inward*, *Soul-ſatisfying* Conſolations of his *bleſſed* Spirit, aſſuring them, that their Names are *written* in the *Lambs Book of Life*. Ceaſing not to pray likewiſe for Us, your

Friends

Friends, and Neighbours, whoſe Callings *oblige* us to *ſtay in* the City; that GOD would *magnifie* his Mercy in *making* us Monuments of his Goodneſſe, by *protecting* us in the *midſt* of Danger: *begging* that our Faith in Him may *not fail* us; and that we may *ſo truſt* in Him, as *not* to *tempt* Him: and that in *His good time* He would (if it *may ſtand* with his *bleſſed* will) give us a *joyfull* Meeting to *His Glory*, and the *Comfort* of Each other. Neither do I *thus write* to you, as if, *becauſe* you are in the *freſh* Air, *therefore* you are *out* of *all* Danger, (you are a *better* Chriſtian I *durſt ſay* then to *think ſo*) though I *heartily* wiſh, the place you are *in* may *prove* an *Ark* and a *Zoar* to you. But my Deſign is to be an *humble* Remembrancer to *mind* you of that *Chriſtian* Duty, in the Performance *whereof*, you will have *great* Peace and Comfort. To draw to a Period: The LORD *open* our Underſtandings, that we may *ſee* the Meaning of His Voice, and *diſcern* the Signification of His Language, when he *ſpeaks* to us *from Heaven* in Signs and Judgements. And may an *holy Fear ſo ſoften* our Hearts, that we may by an *unfeigned* Repentance *go forth* to *meet* Him, and *prevent* (if it *may be*) the *farther Expreſſes* of his *vengefull wrath*. And *ſince* we carry our Lives in our Hands, the LORD give us to have his Fear in our Hearts; that ſo, though in this *Common Calamity* we do *fall* by the ſtroke of the *deſtroying* Angel; yet we may through the *ſpotted vail* of the Peſtilence render *pure*, *unſpotted* Souls to GOD: And *finde*, that the *very Marks* of his Diſpleaſure upon our *Sinfull* Bodies are (through His Grace, and His Sons Death and Bloodſhed) *ſo ſanctifyed*, that they prove *no worſe* then *Love-tokens* to our *departing* Soules. Now the LORD *bleſs*, and *keep* You and Yours, from *all* Danger, and Evil: may *no* Evil happen unto You, nor *any* Plague *come near* Your Dwellings: but *eſpecially* preſerve You all from the Evil of Sin, and the Plague of an *hard* Heart. This is part of *his daily* Prayer, who is,

SIR,

Your True *Friend*, *but*

unworthy *Paſtor*,

C. F.

A brief Prayer for one in Health and at Liberty, both for Sound and Sick:

OR,

Antipeſtilentiall Ejaculations.

And am I yet (bleſſed LORD) among the quick, and not among the dead!
Am I yet breathing in the Land of the Living; O thou LORD of Life and Glory!

WHo am I; that I ſhould have my health, when others are Sick; my ſtrength, when others are Weak; my eaſe, when others are in Payn, my liberty, when others are ſhut up and impriſon'd in their own houſes? What am I? that I ſhould have my Friends and Comforts, while others are left Friendleſſe and Comfortleſſe? that I ſhould live and enjoy my Place and Being, while ſome are turn'd out of their Houſes by the Plague of Peſtilence, others are thruſt out of the World by the ſtrokes of the Deſtroyer! That I ſhould have my Life given me for a Prey, while Thouſands are made a Prey to Death! LORD! Is it becauſe I (or any of us that are yet untouch't) are better then They? No: but rather, becauſe We are worſe: for Thou ſeeſt We are not yet good enough to die. Many of thine own dear Children are taken away by the dreadfull ſtroak of thine heavy Hand: We that ſurvive may well fear, from the Evil, that is to come. Alas! Their Marks are but Thy Love-Tokens: For (dye they what Death-ſoever) Pretious in thy ſight (O LORD) is the Death of thy Saints. They ſhall reſt upon their Beds in Peace: Thou haſt taken them to thy Self: no becauſe they were not worthy of the World: but becauſe the World was not worthy of Them. But if any of thoſe departed have died unprepared: Thy Mercy is the greater to ſpare Me and Others, and to give Us more ſpace: but LORD give Us more Grace alſo to recover Strength of Soul before we go Hence and be no more Here. Nay if any be cut-off in the midſt of their Days (and

in

in the midſt of their Sins too) yet are they happyer then I, or Others: if We only tarry Here to forget GOD: living longer only to live Worſe, and to out-live the Day of our Viſitation. O Thou ever-living Inhabitant of the burning Buſh! 'Tis thy rich Mercy, Favour and Good-will, tis becauſe Thy Compaſſions fayle not: that we are not all conſumed, and that long-ago in the very midſt of our Impenitency, Infidelity and Ingratitude! But O LORD GOD! Let us remember, that Thou art our Life, and the Length of our Dayes. O grant Us (that remain Well) Health of Soul, as Well as of Body, and Life of Grace, as well as of Nature: For the Living ſhall praiſe Thee, and not thoſe that go down into the Pit and Place of Silence! O! grant that We (that eſcape Death and Deſtruction) may prayſe Thee, not only with our Lipps, but like-wiſe with our Lives! And that our chiefeſt giving-thanks may be living Thanks! O! Bleſſed GOD! Prepare all thoſe that are ſick and impriſoned in their Bedds, or Lodgings, O prepare them for what-ſoever Thou prepareſt for Them! Give them Grace humbly to ſubmit to thine holy Will: patiently to bear Thy righteous and fatherly Chaſtiſements: clearly to ſee what is written upon the Rod: Be zealous and amend, and to hear Him that ſmiteth, ſaying: As many as I love, I rebuke and Chaſten. Help them to underſtand the Language of thy Rebukes: that thy Blowes are Balme, and that it is better to be chidden, then not ſpoken to, and better to have the Bones broken, then to be let alone in Sin to periſh irrecoverably. LORD! give them and us Grace to repent unfeignedly of all our Tranſgreſſions: that our Iniquities may not be our ruine. Give Us all godly Sorrow for all our Offences, in Thought, Word, or Deed. Give Us all thine Holy Spirit to inable Us all freely and fully to forgive All that have offended, wronged, or affronted Us at any time, any way. To aſſiſt Us by a lively Faith and fervent Prayer, to make a compleat Reſignation of our Selves to Thee, both in Soul and Body for this Life, or a better.

O ſprinkle Us all (both ſound and ſick) with that Blood of the Lamb of GOD, which ſpeaks better things then that Blood of righteous *Abel*: Take none of Us out of this World, till we are throughly fitted for a better. Help Us all to ſee and flee from the Plague of our own Hearts, to Thee the Father of Mercies, and GOD of all Comfort in the LORD JESUS.

That ſeeing there is no fleeing from Thee, We may all flee to Thee:

Thee: That ſeeing there is no Hiding our Selves from Thee, we may hide our ſelves in Thee: dwelling in the ſecret of the moſt High, by holy Deſires and heavenly Affections, and abiding under the Shaddow of the Almighty, by ſound Faith, and well-rooted Confidence, in and through JESUS CHRIST thy bleſſed Son, Our only Saviour and Redeemer, &c. *Amen.*

Upon the Apprehenſion of Danger by one that is viſited, or ſhut Up.

BLeſſed GOD; I *know* that Nothing *can* be fall me, without thy *holy* Providence; even *this* preſent Danger is by *thine* Appointment; and what Thou haſt *deſign'd* it unto, I know *not*! LORD: give me a *ſweet*, and *ſafe* Aſſurance that I am Thine, and *then* do with me what thou *wilt*: *O! Let me live, and I ſhall praiſe Thee, and thy Judgments ſhall help me?* But if thou haſt *appointed* me to *die* by *this* Viſitation, O! let me *then* come *home* unto Thee, and be *united* in a *ſafer*, and *ſweeter* Union with *Thee*, then *ever*. Grant that through the *ſpotted* Vaile of the Peſtilence, I may render a *pure*, *unſpotted* Soul unto *Thee*. LORD: *hear* me, and *have* Mercy *upon* me, for thy *bleſſed* Son, my *dear* Saviours ſake, who hath *given* his *precious* Blood a Ranſome for *me*: to Him, with Thee O *moſt holy* Father, and thy *bleſſed* Spirit, be *all* Glory and Obedience *for ever*, Amen.

When ſtruck *with Death*: *Pray thus.*

PReſerve me, *O GOD: for in thee have I put my Truſt: forſake me not, O LORD, my GOD: be thou not farr from me, when Trouble is near.* LORD, *ſtrengthen* and *ſupport* my *wavering* Faith: *forgive* me *all* my Sins, and *ſuffer not* my Soul to be *ſurpriz'd* in my *laſt* Agony. *Haſte Thee to help me, O LORD GOD of my ſalvation*, for thy Name ſake; for thy Promiſe ſake; for thy Mercies ſake; for thy *precious* Blood ſake. *Into thy hands I commend my Spirit: for thou haſt redeem'd me, O LORD, Thou GOD of Truth!*

FINIS.